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Commentary & Reply

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EUROPE & NATO ENLARGEMENT

To the Editor:

Professor Ryan Hendrickson's "[NATO's Open Door Policy and the Next Round of Enlargement](#)" (*Parameters*, Winter 2000-01) presents itself as a *tour de table* of prospects and considerations--albeit heavy with US-centric angles like candidates, presidents, and congressional constituencies--that may shape further NATO enlargement.

I believe, however, he came up short of that objective by overlooking deep-seated European-specific political, economic, and military forces currently in play on the continent. It is precisely his limited focus--"US and other NATO member states' willingness to support expansion"--that leaves the reader with an incomplete guide to the Rubik's Cube of factors influencing any future rounds of enlargement. His repeated claim of NATO's "assum[ing] a larger role in European security and military affairs" underestimates, or even ignores, the significance of recent events and trends in Europe. The assertion of a larger NATO role neglects the European Union's ascent in influence on defense and security policy--an ascent that has sparked spirited debate on both sides of the Atlantic on NATO's position in 21st-century Europe.

Remarkably, Hendrickson does not discuss the European Union (EU), its expansion plans, and likely synergism with NATO enlargement. Parallel enlargement programs by NATO and EU will undoubtedly affect one another. At the December 2000 EU Summit in Nice, leaders of the EU's 15 member states and 13 membership candidates sought ways to enhance fair representation for the first new members when they join in 2004, perhaps even 2003. The EU applicants, mainly from Central Europe, include many who are also NATO aspirants (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and some who are already NATO members (Turkey, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic).

While the geographic boundaries of EU enlargement are already defined, the pace of EU expansion will probably lag behind NATO enlargement because of the more extensive and specific reforms--legal, social, economic, and political--required for EU membership. Nevertheless, countries that are both EU and NATO aspirants may face "hard" choices. Membership requirements for both bodies may require national reforms, which in turn leads to decisions on allocating possibly scarce resources. Joining one organization (the EU) implies economic and social benefits, while joining the other implies only additional expenditures to gain long-term but less-immediate security benefits. Because Central European aspirants are by and large "nation building" after the Iron Curtain, more immediate economic rewards may be more attractive than the expenditures necessary for protection under NATO's military umbrella.

Domestic politics will also be key. Leaders must ensure domestic political will exists to support memberships, and once gained, leaders must maintain that will through candidacy *and* integration if they are selected. The Baltics are a good example. Although vocally supportive of NATO membership based on European geography and history, Baltic governments must still work to convince their populations. For instance, recent Lithuanian polls indicate less than half of Lithuanians see any sense in joining NATO, and the Lithuanian government's goal of increasing defense spending to two percent of GDP (some \$220 million) is controversial in a country still struggling toward a free-market economy.

Another possible dynamic for NATO enlargement is action by EU neutrals (Austria, Ireland, Finland, and Sweden). Although Professor Hendrickson focuses on NATO's declared "Open Door Policy," which is generally directed at Central European aspirants, the EU neutrals are an "out of the box" play not to be discounted. If any of these countries decides to seek NATO membership, other EU allies will likely support them to capitalize on existing close relations and multilateral influences. These four neutrals, already participants in NATO's Partnership for Peace Planning &

Review Process (PARP), also have fairly advanced economies and militaries. Although its current government remains on probation, the geopolitical benefit of Austria joining NATO, particularly if adjacent Central European aspirants are also invited, would more closely weave the heart of Europe together with shared security policies and practices. This could prove critical in today's security environment where more likely threats to NATO's member states are less conventional and include organized crime, terrorism, refugees, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition to influences emanating from outside the Alliance, enlargement may also be shaped inside NATO by the politics of those allies that are already EU members, as well as those that have applied for EU membership. Currently, 11 of the 15 present EU members are also NATO allies, while four NATO nations are EU applicants.

During the past year's deliberations on the future NATO-EU relationship, particularly over the European Security and Defense Policy, there were instances of frustration within the Alliance over the slow progress on substantive aspects of the relationship. At times the tenor of debate reflected more serious challenges to NATO's primacy in Europe and attempts to wrest influence to ultimately "decouple" Europe from America.

The central issue is the EU's plan to form a rapid-reaction force by 2003 for peacekeeping and other crisis situations when NATO does not take part. In efforts to prevent duplication by NATO and the EU, as well as to preserve NATO's centrality in Europe, a key component is the "assured access" of the EU to NATO defense planning. France, an EU member and the only NATO member not belonging to the integrated military structure, has been vocally championing an autonomous European defense policy as well as its dissenting view that all military planning must go through NATO. On the other hand, Turkey (an EU applicant) has so far refused the EU access to NATO planning for the EU force until Ankara and other non-EU NATO members are assured of closer participation than the EU has so far offered.

Concerns over possible competition between the European security organizations, as well as members' levels of commitment to the Alliance, were enough for then-Secretary of Defense Cohen to warn during his last address to NATO Defense Ministers in December 2000 that "NATO could become a relic." In the same address, Secretary Cohen further cautioned that the Alliance "should not accept an 'EU caucus' within NATO." Such factionalism or competition among organizations could transfer to enlargement and lead to decisions that may not best serve the Alliance's overall strategic interests.

NATO is the preeminent vehicle for US participation in transatlantic security. Enlargement can play a key role in our overall strategy to build an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe. Adding qualified new states can strengthen the Alliance against current and future threats, consolidate democracy and stability, and help erase outdated Cold War dividing lines. However, further enlargement will require adroit leadership, particularly with the continent embracing the EU and flexing newfound federalist muscles. This will require the United States to pay greater attention to the nuances of European politics while putting less stock in our own domestic politics. For US decisionmakers to not only understand but successfully help NATO navigate further enlargement, a more thorough and comprehensive analysis will be required than is presented by Professor Hendrickson.

Colonel Chris J. Krisinger, USAF
OSD-State Department Exchange Officer
Washington, D.C.

The Author Replies:

I appreciate Colonel Krisinger's interest in my article. I agree that NATO enlargement is a complex topic; many factors could hypothetically influence if and when the Alliance expands. The changes occurring in the European Union and the movement toward a pan-European military force may certainly affect how NATO expands.

At the same time, many of the issues surrounding EU expansion entail social, legal, and economic criteria, and thus represent a considerably different set of questions from the NATO enlargement process. Likewise, before an EU military force is created, serious political and diplomatic challenges must be overcome. For example, EU member-states such as the United Kingdom and Denmark have shown noticeable reluctance to shift their military and security foundation away from NATO. For these reasons, it seems best analytically to remain focused on the public statements

expressed by the NATO allies toward the "aspiring" NATO member states, as well as how high NATO officials place enlargement on their future priority list. At the time of the article's publication, these positions were accurately represented.

Colonel Krisinger also raises concern over my focus on the place of the United States in shaping NATO expansion. Given the consensus among journalists, academics, and practitioners that the United States played a central role in determining how and when NATO would expand (see for example James Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When*), such attention appears justified. Moreover, diplomats from the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland spent nearly as much time lobbying the US Senate for expansion as they did in many other NATO member states. Perhaps this next round will be fundamentally different. Yet it seems doubtful that many Senators will shy away from expressing their views and exercising their influence on how the Alliance evolves. Senator Jesse Helms' recent remark that the Baltic states should be added to the Alliance is further evidence that senior and powerful members of Congress will attempt to play a major role in the next round of enlargement.

Ryan C. Hendrickson

OF SWARMS AND INITIATIVE

To the Editor:

With regard to the article by Thomas Adams, "[The Real Military Revolution](#)" (*Parameters*, Autumn 2000), on the potential future of the US military forces becoming organized into a swarming type of force, I believe the analysis, underlying assumptions, and extrapolations are invalid.

First, the existing Army is not rigid. The Army may seem fixed and rigid in time of peace, but in conflict it becomes quite flexible, at least when competently led:

. A commander gives a command to a unit to perform a task within a grander scheme. The specific tactics to perform that task should be left to the smaller unit commander on the scene (note the failure of the hostage rescue mission under President Carter for violating that rule). The local commander has remarkable flexibility within a constrained theater.

. Since the times of the Roman army, individual soldiers and units have been encouraged to exercise initiative on the battlefield, to modify the orders given to fit new conditions. In fact, one of the effects of *élan* is to increase battlefield initiative, thus increasing the likelihood of success. That is how Napoleon was able to win, and Guderian, and Rommel, and Patton.

Colonel Adams' analogy to birds and insects is inadequate, since they each have only a small set of previously defined purposes and rules. Hence, carrier pigeons are extinct because they did not vary their flocking strategy. Hunters using "punt" guns could down a hundred water birds with a single shot. Swarming based upon a pre-existing set of simple rules can be easily defeated. (Whales use the schooling strategy of fish to net the entire school.)

The worry about units being overwhelmed by too much data does not take into account the normal usage of information filters. Unit leaders or members will not need or want to know what is happening on the entire battlefield or theater of war, but what is happening right around them.

The analogy about the feeding of New York is terrible, in that it could be so easily upset in wartime. Logistics could not be done in wartime using a gestalt system like "market dynamics." Similarly, if a general is to have an army operate to an overall strategy, which I presume will not be published and be common knowledge, then command and discipline must be applied. A general must be able to order a group of soldiers to perform a battlefield task--even if they will be doomed--with the confidence that it will be done. Will our soldiers be like the Spartans at Thermopylae who knowingly gave their lives for Greece, following orders that meant their own death? They often have, but they often did not have the whole story.

Colonel Adams does not address training. He describes units and soldiers with many sophisticated devices, but how will we train them in their effective use? Will we have time to train everyone, or just selected groups who have committed a significant number of years to the military to justify the cost?

He also does not address supply and logistics. This swarm may be dynamic and unstructured, but it needs to be fed and supplied. This means depots, lines of supplies, and a logistical infrastructure. That constitutes a whole set of weak points for a swarm.

Last, with our military relying heavily on communications and computing devices, won't this be a structural weak point? Can a future, sophisticated combatant knock out our fighting ability by somehow interrupting our ability to communicate with each other, with our satellites, with our bases, and even with each soldier? Can he find a way around our electronic shields and filters? Will combat degradation of equipment be enough to render the devices useless after enough time in the field? Will our military capability degrade the loss of working devices for our soldiers? (In World War II, German armor was hampered by breakdowns of the Tigers, which could not go 100 miles without breaking down.)

Interestingly, Colonel Adams does not talk about or address the future role or impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI). For instance, if a fighter could be piloted by an AI brain, then it could perform at limits beyond human endurance, or take on roles too risky for people. Fighters could be a lot smaller, like observation drones, yet be equipped with potent weaponry. AI also might enable machines to take over more complex decisionmaking functions on ships, planes, and on the battlefield. AI might enable adaptable information filters to be used to prevent information overload of commanders and soldiers.

In conclusion, I think Colonel Adams needs to look more closely at how the military really operates under battle conditions, and to be more careful when extrapolating. I would look more deeply at the swarm idea for certain smaller units, not an entire army, and especially not the entire military. Also, the author might want to analyze what war conditions favor the usage of the swarm organization and which do not--theater conflict, special forces, offensive operations, defensive operations, armor, infantry, etc. The effects of information in the past also might be revealing (e.g., the ability of the German Panzer III and IV tanks to defeat the vastly superior T-34 tanks in Barbarossa because of radio communications). Countermeasures also require attention--a swarming rule set leads to predictable and defeatable behavior.

Finally, the military must always be under control. It cannot be like Celtic or American Indian warriors, who would make their own minds up as to whether they would partake in a battle, go home, or how they would participate. The modern battlefield is not an arena for democracy.

Despite these criticisms, the article is an intriguing one. It's good to see that our military is thinking about such things.

Craig Dillon
Chicago, Illinois

The Author Replies:

Mr. Dillon's letter begins with the blanket statement that everything in the article is just plain wrong ("the analysis, underlying assumptions, and extrapolations"). In so doing he condemns the effort of numerous respected practitioners and theorists upon whose work mine is based. Since he makes no mention of his own credentials for such a sweeping statement, presumably the letter is meant to stand on its own. Unfortunately, it fails to do so. In fact, much of the commentary seems to have little or no connection with the article it purports to critique.

The first remark is followed by another blanket statement that the Army is not "fixed and rigid." No one ever said it was. It does, however, lack a great deal of adaptability as witnessed by the Chief of Staff's own current transformation initiative, which has undertaken radical measures in order to provide a degree of flexibility. The eminent historian Russell Weigley has dealt with the topic of military adaptability at length, and I commend his writings to anyone wishing to explore the topic further.

Mr. Dillon then alleges that command authority solves all problems when competently exercised. That may be true in some idealized sense, but Dillon fails to specify its application to the question at hand. His observation that a failure to allow the on-scene commander to dictate tactics resulted in the failure of the Iran hostage rescue mission fails on the facts. The proximate cause was mechanical failure followed by a collision between aircraft on the ground. Tactics had nothing to do with it. Nor does this comment have any obvious connection with the article.

He next invokes most of Western military history (from the Romans to Patton) again without specifying what it is that this reference actually proves, unless it is the dubious proposition that battlefield élan enabled all these militaries and individual leaders to succeed. In the case of the Romans, for example, it can be argued that professionalism, superior organization, and grim determination had more to do with their success than élan.

The comments on initiative and its relation to élan are equally mysterious since, by most interpretations, élan refers to vigor and enthusiasm and has no necessary connection with initiative. Likewise, the examples cited (Romans, Napoleon, etc.) do not support the contention. Napoleon, for example, greatly valued competence in his subordinates. But he is famous for declaiming that he himself was the sole commander. Furthermore, nothing in his writings suggests he saw subordinate initiative as the key to his success. Indeed, he distrusted his subordinates and dispatched legions of "commissars" to monitor not only their actions but their sentiments as well.

It is also unclear how Mr. Dillon's comments on the importance of initiative in any way refute or mitigate some part of the article. The rise of self-organization in human systems depends to a large degree on initiative. Military information systems not only provide more information, but they press it further down the chain of command. When this information is combined with an increased ability to act (greater firepower, on-call fires, agility, etc.), it provides a fertile field for self-organization to occur. Any display of initiative only advances this development. Furthermore, not all displays of initiative are desirable.

Mr. Dillon then objects to a supposed analogy between soldiers and "birds and insects" on the grounds that birds and insects have "only a small set" of behaviors. First of all, the idea that birds and insects have only a few rigid behaviors is fallacious. On this topic I recommend Edward O. Wilson's famous work on sociobiology. Second, the discussion of birds and insects in the article was intended to provide familiar examples of complex behaviors arising from simple rules. The article also pointed out, more than once, that humans have vastly more complex behaviors.

After that, Mr. Dillon asserts that "carrier pigeons" are extinct because they "did not vary their flocking behavior." First, I suspect he means passenger pigeons since carrier pigeons are clearly not extinct. Second, the survival strategy of passenger pigeons (flocking was only one aspect of this strategy) was overwhelmingly successful against all natural enemies (including man) for many thousands of years. Then Dillon seems to assert that passenger pigeons were water birds, but that may be a simple error in syntax. His overall point is unclear since he seems to be operating on different levels of analysis simultaneously (individual versus group). I do concede that if humans are ever attacked by entities that are as socially, economically, and technologically advanced over us as early industrial-age man was over pigeons and ducks, we are very likely to suffer their fate--although we might escape actually being eaten.

Mr. Dillon's comment on whales is somewhat off the point, since many types of whales (i.e. the large Cetacea) do not, in fact, eat fish. Their major food is krill, a shrimp-like creature. Furthermore, since schooling as a strategy aims for the survival of the species and not individuals or groups, it matters not at all if schools are regularly eaten whole. Schooling among fish has proven amazingly successful for millions of years, even against industrial humans until the mid-20th century. No species is known or even suspected to have been reduced to extinction by natural predators.

Mr. Dillon goes on to suggest that my discussion "does not take into account the normal usage of information filters." Again, this is off the point. A major purpose of battlefield digitization is to make more information available at all levels. As we have already seen in field exercises, leaders often handle the increased message flow by simply ignoring the bulk of the information. This is normal filtering in action, but it is hardly a solution. The problem is to present the right information in usable form at the right time and place, possibly by using automated "filters." This will increase the tendency to self-organize, since various junior leaders will then receive different (though not contradictory) "tailored" information to go with their increased capability for independent action.

Finally, Mr. Dillon suggests that I should have written a longer article addressing a number of related topics, such as training, artificial intelligence, and issues around electromagnetic propagation. These are all interesting and sometimes relevant issues. My only excuse is that the editors of this journal, while both kind and generous, have steadfastly (if inexplicably) refused to turn over the entire journal to me. By way of apology, I can only add that I have published other articles dealing with most of these topics.

Thomas Adams

Reviewed 7 May 2001. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil